

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 13508

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: SHUM, UK, ID
SUBJECT: BRITISH POLICY ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN INDONESIA

REFERENCE: (A) STATE 176054; (B) STATE 176055;
(C) JAKARTA 10033; (D) LONDON 6836

1. IN DISCUSSION AT FCO AUGUST 11, WE MENTIONED ICJ ARTICLE AND SUBSTANCE OF REFTELS TO SIMONS, HEAD OF FCO SOUTH EAST ASIA DEPARTMENT. LATTER COMMENTED THAT BRITISH IN JAKARTA HAVE SPOKEN TO A FEW OF THE RELEASED DETAINEES AND TO ICRC REPRESENTATIVES, AND HAVE REPORTED THAT ON THE WHOLE THE BRITISH DO NOT BELIEVE THE GOI IS STARVING OR ACTIVELY BRUTALIZING THE POLITICAL PRISONERS. INsofar AS THE BRITISH ARE AWARE, INDONESIAN PRACTICE HAS IMPROVED.

2. SIMONS CONTINUED THAT ON THIS ISSUE THE INDONESIANS "ARE THEIR OWN WORST ENEMY". THEIR PUBLIC RELATIONS ARE "ABYSMAL". IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS THEY ARE GRUDGING AND HAM-FISTED. THIS ANNOYS REPRESENTATIVES OF ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE ICRC, WHO WOULD OTHERWISE NOT BE ILL-DISPOSED TOWARDS THE GOI. THE BRITISH AGREE THAT GOI PERFORMANCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS COMES
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IN THE CATEGORY OF "NOT TOO BAD" BY THIRD WORLD STANDARDS.

3. SIMONS NOTED THAT DURING THE LAST TEN DAYS (JULY 20-29) BEFORE PARLIAMENT RECESSED, THE FCO RECEIVED 21 WRITTEN PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN INDONESIA, AND THAT MOST OF THESE WERE INSPIRED BY TAPOL.

4. IN RESPONSE TO THIS SERIES OF QUESTIONS FROM MP'S ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS AND POLITICAL PRISONERS IN INDONESIA, FCO SPOKESMAN LUARD GAVE THE FOLLOWING PUBLIC REPLIES: ON JULY 20 HE STATED "OUR AMBASSADOR IN JAKARTA HAS BEEN KEEPING IN REGULAR TOUCH WITH THE INDONESIAN AUTHORITIES WHO HAVE ASSURED HIM THAT PLANS...ANNOUNCED FOR RELEASING PRISONERS WHO WILL NOT BE BROUGHT TO TRIAL WILL BE IMPLEMENTED". ON JULY 22 HE ADDED, "THE NAMES OF SOME RELEASED DETAINEES ARE KNOWN", AND ON JULY 25 STATED, "I AM SATISFIED THAT THE INDONESIANS ARE IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAM OF RELEASES THEY ANNOUNCED". SUBSEQUENTLY ON JULY 27 HE SPECIFIED THAT THE INDONESIAN ASSURANCES ON IMPLEMENTING THE RELEASE PLANS HAD BEEN GIVEN TO THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR ON JULY 18, ADDING, "I AM UNAWARE OF ANY RELEASES THAT MAY HAVE TAKEN PLACE SINCE THAT DATE". IN ANSWER TO A SERIES OF QUESTIONS ABOUT ALLEGED INDONESIAN ATROCITIES IN EAST TIMOR, LUARD REPLIED SIMPLY AND CONSISTENTLY, BEGINNING ON JULY 21, "WE HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT ABOUT ALLEGATIONS OF ATROCITIES, WHICH THEY HAVE DENIED".

5. WE DID NOT MENTION TO SIMONS GOI-USG DISCUSSION SUCH AS THOSE REPORTED IN JAKARTA 10123 AND 10124, AND WE UNDERSTAND FROM JAKARTA 10824 THAT THE GOI IS GIVING OUR CONFIDENTIAL

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EMBASSY THERE SOME INFORMATION ON THE SUBJECT EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE USG. HOWEVER, WE ALSO NOTE IN PARAGRAPH 4 OF JAKARTA 10123 THAT THE GOI IS INFORMING "INTERESTED EMBASSIES" OF THE NAMES OF PROSPECTIVE RELEASEES AND ASSUME THAT THIS WILL INCLUDE THE BRITISH IN VIEW OF THEIR OWN CONTINUING DIALOGUE WITH THE INDONESIANS ON HUMAN RIGHTS.

BREWSTER

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